

# Analysis of Inclusive Education Policy Implementation in Developing Countries

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to describe policy implementation in some developing countries. This research focuses on the implementation of inclusive education policies in developing countries. Developing countries are considered to be lacking in implementing inclusive education policies. In addition, developing countries often adopt policies from developed countries that are not in accordance with the characteristics of their countries. This research uses a literature study of journals related to the implementation of inclusive education in developing countries. The results show that the state that holds the consensus in the implementation of inclusive education has guaranteed the implementation of inclusive education in the constitution. The implementation of inclusive education experiences several obstacles related to accessibility, lack of accompanying teachers, poor acceptance by school community members and less than optimal funding. Constitutionally, the state has guaranteed the implementation of inclusive education, but in its implementation there are still several challenges that result in the achievement of the objectives of organizing inclusive education is not optimal. Therefore, the government needs to be consistent in implementing inclusive education policies, so that the achievement of inclusive education goals can be achieved.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a consensus among national and international communities. Inclusive education is a global movement that emerged in response to the exclusion of learners who were viewed as different by the education system (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). Waitoller & Artiles (2013) further explain that inclusive education can be defined as an ongoing and systemic process of changing

school culture to inform practices that facilitate access, participation and learning for learners with diversity. Universal access to quality education and enthusiasm around inclusive education is increasing. The right of children with disabilities to receive inclusive and quality education is internationally recognized (Braun, 2022).

Countries that hold a consensus to implement inclusive education, structurally form legislation to ensure the implementation of inclusive education. One example of a country that implements inclusive education is Indonesia. Therefore, Indonesia has legislation that guarantees the implementation of inclusive education as stipulated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System Article 5 paragraph 1 and Permendikbud Number 46 of 2014 concerning Special Education in Higher Education. The right of students with disabilities to access education has been guaranteed by the state through its constitution.

Countries that are committed to implementing inclusive education may have made laws and policies on inclusive education, but the practice in schools may not fulfill the rhetoric (Phillips, 2013; Tiwari et al., 2015). Similarly, Cologon (2019) states that implementing inclusive education is easier at the policy-making level, but implementation is not as easy as formulating inclusion policies. In other words, there is a gap between policy making and implementing inclusive education policies. There is a gap between the ideals and expectations of the government in policy-making and what happens in the field.

The gap between policy-making expectations and policy implementation on the ground is supported by data from a study of 28 countries participating in the Education for All Fast Track Initiative Partnership. The data shows that, of the 28 participating countries, only 10 provide access to inclusive education. The remaining 18 countries provided very little detail on proposed strategies for including children with disabilities in school or made no reference to disability or inclusion at all (WHO & Bank, 2011). This suggests that there is a need for political will and good governance in recognizing and committing to comprehensive and sustainable measures to address social exclusion and discrimination against children with disabilities in the education system (Unicef, 2012).

Countries that are committed to implementing inclusive education should pay attention to policy implementation in the field. The state needs to take part in policy implementation, so that the achievement of the ideals and goals contained in the policy can be realized optimally. This needs to be done, because based on the results of research by Bibiana et al. (2020), it shows that the implementation of inclusive education policies in developing countries has not been implemented effectively. This is due to poor policy implementation and the challenges that exist as barriers to the implementation of inclusive education. In addition, developing countries tend to adopt policies from developed countries that are not in accordance with the characteristics of their countries, and these policies are often rejected by their citizens (Fon, 2016). Therefore, this research will focus on several developing countries to find out whether all developing countries experience the same obstacles or not. This is necessary, because previous research has only focused on one developing country, not elaborated with other developing countries.

Another challenge to policy implementation is that children with disabilities are routinely denied the right to quality education, particularly in developing countries (WHO & Bank, 2011). Therefore, it is necessary to develop appropriate strategies related to minimizing or eradicating some of the challenges in implementing inclusive education policies. The implementation of inclusive education has a positive correlation with school strategies (Bibiana et al., 2020). In other words, if the school strategy is good, then the implementation of inclusive education policies is also good.

Schools need to develop effective strategies according to the circumstances and needs of individual learners to implement inclusive education policies. The way schools articulate strategies to overcome barriers enables learners with disabilities to access and fully participate in the learning process. Schools need to scale up programs, improve successful policies and strategies and conduct evidence-based advocacy to increase the scale of impact (Unicef, 2012).

The implementation of inclusive education policies can be effective if schools are able to modify

strategies and school systems to provide a barrier-free environment for learners with disabilities. The realization of an inclusive system can be done by working together between schools, parents and stakeholders through continuous communication, learning partnerships, participation and consultative decision-making (Bibiana et al., 2020). Thus, students with disabilities can increase their participation and accessibility in education.

This research report is expected to serve as an overview of the implementation of inclusive education policies in several developing countries. Therefore, this research focuses on the implementation of inclusive education policies in several developing countries, to find out whether each developing country experiences the same challenges. Thus, this report can be used as a study material to examine the challenges of implementing inclusive education policies in developing countries, as well as how to overcome some of these challenges to realize the effectiveness of implementing inclusive education policies in schools.

## 2. METHOD

This research uses a literature review with three main steps, namely: 1) exploration of scientific articles 2) interpretation of data 3) communication (Flick, 2013). The research process was carried out by 1) Enter the Journal account and filter the data 2) Then search for journals with keywords policy strategies for effective implementation of inclusive education, inclusive education, and implementation of inclusive education policies 3) Select scientific articles that match the research objectives, 4) Analyze scientific articles and interpret data, and 5) Report research results and communicate.

The developing countries of focus are those on the Asian and African continents, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Kenya and Cameroon. The reason for choosing countries from these two continents is because the Asian and African continents have the most developing countries, compared to other continents (Pristiandaru, 2022).

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

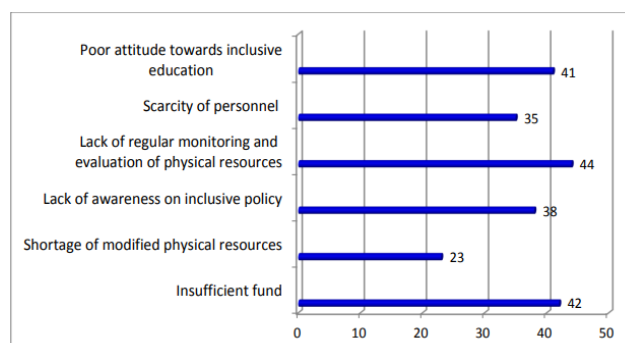
Overcoming the physical barriers of learners with disabilities in teaching and learning activities can be done by implementing several strategies according to the needs of learners. Thus, schools can increase the participation and accessibility of learners with disabilities. Based on the results of research by Bibiana et al (2020), most schools in Kenya have not provided accessibility for people with disabilities in four schools.

Some schools in Kenya still do not have accessibility for learners with disabilities. This can be seen from the lack of monitoring and evaluation of the safety of facilities for learners with disabilities, the lack of accessible school buildings, and facilities and infrastructure that are considered less accessible. Similarly, in Tanzania, learners do not get accessibility in the school environment because of their physical limitations. Learners have difficulty accessing doors, hallways, stairs and toilets (Braun, 2022). It is not much different from the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia, which has obstacles in the availability of accessible infrastructure for students with disabilities (Agustin, 2017; Muazza et al., 2018; Siswanto & Susanti, 2019; Wati, 2014; Yuwono, 2017). Therefore, schools need a strategy to provide accessible facilities for students with disabilities. Thus they can enjoy the existing facilities and enjoy the teaching and learning process to maximize their knowledge and talents.

Bibiana's (2020) interview results show that there were learners who fell down the stairs, when going back to class after the library, due to inaccessible facilities. The incident made learners with disabilities think of quitting school and made the incident the last day of visiting the library. Another disabled learner thought about leaving school because of verbal bullying and being considered homosexual. The learner had difficulty speaking, causing his voice to resemble that of a little girl. These traumatic events make learners with disabilities very vulnerable. Therefore, schools need to develop strategies to modify accessible school facilities and strive to create a welcoming school environment for learners with disabilities. Thus, the inclusive education system is expected to reduce or eliminate bullying. This is in accordance with one of the objectives of implementing inclusive education is to

reduce bullying (Braun, 2022; Organization & Bank, 2011).

The challenges that some Kenyan schools face in developing strategies to address the physical barriers of learners with disabilities include the following:



**Picture 1.** Challenges Faced in Creating Strategies to Overcome Physical Barriers (Bibiana et al., 2020).

Based on the research results of Bibiana et al (2020) in Figure 1, it can be seen that there are several challenges that must be faced before developing strategies to overcome the physical barriers of students with disabilities. These challenges are related to the attitude of students towards students with disabilities which is considered lacking. The negative attitude of school community towards people with disabilities is a barrier for learners with disabilities who attend public schools (Braun, 2022; Organization & Bank, 2011). Negative attitudes towards learners with disabilities also occur in Malaysia. Teachers in Malaysia have serious doubts about implementing inclusion practices. These doubts result in negative attitudes towards learners with disabilities. Teachers in Malaysia believe that the academic performance of learners with disabilities can be improved in special schools (Bailey et al., 2015).

Further barriers relate to the lack of teachers and the lack of skills of special assistant teachers for learners with disabilities. In addition, there is a lack of regular monitoring and evaluation of physical resources as a major challenge affecting schools' strategies towards inclusive education. Lack of awareness about education policies, lack of modified physical resources to improve safety for learners and insufficient funds to restructure schools. Lack of funding for learners with disabilities has been a common gap in education policy. The disparity in funding allocation is not limited to Kenya, but also occurs in Tanzania (Braun, 2022), as well as Indonesia (Agustin, 2017; Amka, 2019; Jaya Indra, Badrujaman Aip, 2022; Organization & Bank, 2011; Wati, 2014; Yuwono, 2017). In addition, there is a lack of other targeted incentives for children with disabilities to attend school and a lack of social protection and support services for children with disabilities (Organization & Bank, 2011).

A strategy that can be implemented as an effort to overcome some of the challenges to overcome the physical barriers of students with disabilities is by hiring special assistant teachers (Bibiana et al., 2020). Facts in the field based on the results of research by Siswanto & Susanti (2019); Agustin (2017); Wati (2014) explain that some schools that implement inclusive education do not have special assistant teachers. In line with the results of Purnomo's research (2016) which explains that the number of special assistant teachers (GPK) is still insufficient. Therefore, some schools utilize class teachers to assist students with disabilities, even though the competence of class teachers is still not good in assisting students with disabilities (Braun, 2022; Purnomo, 2016). There is a need to improve the competence of classroom teachers who double as GPK through inclusive education training (Bailey et al., 2015; Purnomo, 2016). This needs to be done, because based on the results of Waitoller & Artiles' research (2013), learners with disabilities are more likely to learn inclusive education.

A critical imperative for the development of inclusive school systems is the capacity to nurture and develop teachers who have the understanding, skills, critical sensitivity and contextual awareness to provide quality educational access, participation and outcomes for all learners (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). Furthermore, Waitoller & Artiles (2013) explain that teacher influence is much greater than school

influence in low socioeconomic schools. Well-trained teachers and supportive schools are essential for successful inclusive education (Amka, 2019). The impact of teachers who lack special education skills leaves learners with no knowledge (Braun, 2022). Teachers who lack skills in dealing with learners with disabilities will articulate negative views about children with disabilities and their families (Bailey et al., 2015). In line with Amka, (2019) who explained that teachers' limited knowledge and skills in special education often cannot accommodate all differences in children's abilities and development. In other words, it is important to develop the skills of special assistant teachers for students with disabilities so that they can improve their abilities. When viewed further, teachers are the frontline who interact directly with students during the teaching and learning process.

The next strategy to overcome physical barriers is to conduct regular coaching and evaluation of physical resources to meet the needs of learners with disabilities as a key strategy for implementing inclusive education policies. In addition, modify school resources and facilities to make them accessible to learners with disabilities (Bibiana et al., 2020; Purnomo, 2016). Increasing stakeholders' sensitivity to inclusive education policies and increasing fund mobilization (Bibiana et al., 2020). The strategies mentioned above imply that schools need to make changes to provide opportunities and support for learners with special education needs.

## Discussion

Several studies have shown that although inclusion is recognized as a desirable form of education for learners with disabilities in the policies of many developing countries, it is not adequately implemented in practice (Bibiana et al., 2020; Braun, 2022; Organization & Bank, 2011). Tanzania is a signatory to many international and regional conventions that promote education for all children including inclusive education, yet the education of learners with disabilities has received little attention. In Tanzania, the likelihood of a child never attending school doubles if they have a disability. Studies of children with disabilities in Tanzania show that 58% have never attended school, 38% of children with disabilities are of primary school age and 0.4% of all children in school are identified as having special needs or disabilities (Braun, 2022).

Tanzania has adopted three main approaches to educating learners with disabilities: special schools, integrated schools and inclusive schools (Mkumbo in Braun, 2022). Special schools only accept learners who are blind or deaf. Integrated schools educate learners with disabilities in mainstream schools in separate specialized classrooms. Inclusive schools educate learners with disabilities in the same educational environment as their non-disabled peers. Mkumbo (in Braun, 2022) further explains that the most common schools are special schools or integrated schools. There are very few inclusive schools in Tanzania, so they have limited access.

The barriers to implementing inclusive education in Tanzania are related to sociocultural attitudes, funding and resource availability, physical barriers and teacher capacity (Braun, 2022). Negative attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities are often cited as a major barrier to inclusive education. Children with disabilities are perceived as useless children who do not need education. The main obstacle to the implementation of inclusive education in Tanzania is a serious lack of resources. Schools do not have the necessary resources to support the learning of learners with disabilities. The lack of facilities in schools means that learners often choose to drop out of school.

The Tanzanian government seeks to identify and address barriers throughout the education system by including learners with disabilities. In addition, the government seeks to increase collaboration between government and non-government stakeholders to address identified barriers and ensure that the right to inclusive education is upheld for children with disabilities (Braun, 2022). In 2009 the government published the inaugural National Strategy for Inclusive Education, to provide assurance that all children, youth and adults in Tanzania will have equal access to quality education in inclusive settings. In 2017, the government again issued the National Strategy for Inclusive Education, to promote an inclusive education system that removes barriers that limit the participation and achievement of all learners, that respects diverse needs, abilities and characteristics, and that eliminates

all forms of discrimination in the learning environment. Some of these efforts are expected to make learners with disabilities access inclusive education without barriers.

The policy analysis model used is Vedung's (2017) effectiveness model. The model consists of analyzing goals, outcomes, system components, client interests, and stakeholder interests. Analysis of the achievement of the goal of organizing inclusive education from several countries is to provide equal access for students with disabilities in the realm of education. The facts in the field show that several countries have policies to guarantee the rights of students with disabilities. However, when viewed in terms of practice, there are still many obstacles that must be experienced in achieving the objectives of implementing inclusive education. These obstacles range from the negative response of the school community towards students with disabilities, lack of accessibility that endangers students with disabilities, and the lack of special assistant teachers. In addition, the allocation of funds for the implementation of inclusive education is still not optimal. The analysis of the side effects of suboptimal inclusive education policies is related to the lack of skills and knowledge of classroom teachers who become special assistant teachers. Teachers' lack of skills and knowledge makes them not believe that inclusive education can improve the abilities of students with disabilities (Bailey et al., 2015).

Analyze the outcomes of a policy that can be observed through the goal-free evaluation model. This model is used as an attempt to solve the problem of side effects that tend to be underestimated and goal-based evaluation. This model makes the evaluator more open to the total impact of the entire policy set. The effects of the inclusive education program are compared with the needs of the client or in this case, learners with disabilities. Learners' needs related to mastery of subject matter will be well achieved if the special assistant teacher has good knowledge (Yuwono, 2017). However, material-related needs will be difficult to meet if the government does not fully support the procurement of materials for students with disabilities. Procuring materials for learners with disabilities in Tanzania is difficult due to the lack of teacher skills and government support. This makes it difficult for schools to procure materials for learners with disabilities (Braun, 2022).

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by assessing implementation and feedback (Vedung, 2017). The implementation of the inclusive education policy experienced several obstacles, however, it cannot be denied that the inclusive education policy provides benefits in terms of equal access to education even though the achievement of its goals has not been optimal. The inclusive education policy enables learners to continue their education to a higher school level and improve their grades in examinations. Based on the results of Yuwono's research (2017), four Gadang 2 Banjarmasin elementary schools have high outcomes. This means that 99% of children with special needs can continue to a higher school level. Some things that are considered lacking in the implementation of inclusive education policies are related to the goals that have been set that do not match the current reality, and the recruitment of students with special needs has not been implemented properly (Yuwono, 2017). The results of the evaluation of inclusive education in Jakarta show that the components of the learning planning aspect are 69% in the unfavorable category, the learning implementation aspect is 55.38% in the unfavorable category and the learning evaluation aspect is 70.77% in the unfavorable category (Jaya Indra, Badrujaman Aip, 2022). The less than optimal implementation of inclusive education policies can be improved by improving teacher skills and school commitment in developing strategies to overcome some of these obstacles.

Client-oriented analysis focuses on assessing client satisfaction with the implementation of a program, in this case the implementation of an inclusive education program. Good teacher ability in terms of competencies such as curriculum differentiation, curriculum modification, individualized learning, cooperative learning, learning motivation and flexible assessment, will make learners disabled to improve test scores and get higher education (Yuwono, 2017). However, if the teacher's ability is lacking, it will make learners receive negative assessments (Bailey et al., 2015), and gain no knowledge (Braun, 2022). Therefore, there is a need for teacher training to increase adequate knowledge and skills to support children with special education needs (Bailey et al., 2015).

The analysis of the stakeholder approach concerns the issues of the people concerned. The people

concerned relate to those who formulate the policy, initiate, fund and those responsible for implementing the program. In the implementation of inclusive education, the actor involved is the government. How the government makes policy and evaluates the policy. The government needs to conduct regular evaluations to assess the implementation of the inclusive education program to make improvements to the system that are less than optimal. This was done by the Tanzanian government, which issued its first inclusive education policy in 2009 and made policy improvements in 2017 (Braun, 2022). Furthermore, the Tanzanian government seeks to increase collaboration between government and non-government stakeholders to overcome barriers identified by national policy actors and ensure that the right to inclusive education is upheld for children with disabilities in Tanzania.

Inclusive education has become a consensus among national and international communities. Countries that hold the consensus of inclusive education, structurally make policies and laws to ensure the implementation of inclusive education. However, in practice there are several obstacles, so that the achievement of the objectives of the policy is less than optimal. Learners experience several barriers to accessing inclusive education. These obstacles range from accessibility, lack of accompanying teachers, poor school community acceptance and suboptimal funding. The barriers experienced by learners are common in developing countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Kenya and Tanzania.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Inclusive education has become a consensus among national and international communities. Countries that hold the consensus of inclusive education, structurally make policies and laws to ensure the implementation of inclusive education. However, in practice there are several obstacles, so that the achievement of the objectives of the policy is less than optimal. Learners experience several barriers to accessing inclusive education. These obstacles range from accessibility, lack of accompanying teachers, poor school community acceptance and suboptimal funding. The barriers experienced by learners are common in developing countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Kenya and Tanzania.

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